

Message Text

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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION TO SECSTATE INFO LIMA DEA HQS WASHDC
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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: SNAR MX OREP

SUBJECT: ECHEVERRIA PROPOSES MIXED COMMISSIONS AND TOP-LEVEL
COOPERATION IN PUBLIC PROGRAM TO COMBAT DRUGS

1. SUMMARY: WITH CONGRESSMEN WOLFF AND GILMAN PRESENT, PRES
ECHEVERRIA YESTERDAY SURPRISED US WITH PROPOSAL TO EXCHANGE
PRESIDENTIAL LETTERS AIMED AT ESTABLISHING PARALLEL MIXED COM-
MISSIONS TO ATTACK DRUG PROBLEM ALONG BROADER FRONT AND SENSI-
TIZE PUBLIC TO DANGERS OF DRUG USE. CONGRESSMEN REACTED
WITH ENTHUSIASM AND WE SEE MUCH MERIT IN PROPOSAL, ALTHOUGH THERE
ARE PITFALLS. REQUEST DEPT'S PRELIMINARY REACTION AND GUIDANCE
BEFORE FOLLOW-UP MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SATURDAY AFTERNOON,
JAN. 19. END SUMMARY.

2. WHEN I TOOK CONGRESSMEN WOLFF AND GILMAN TO CALL ON PRES

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ECHEVERRIA LAST EVENING, WE WERE TREATED TO REMARKABLE DISPLAY

OF PRESIDENTIAL CONCERN OVER NARCOTICS PROBLEM AND ENTHUSIASM FOR CLOSER, MORE COMPREHENSIVE COOPERATION. AFTER REITERATING HIS FIRM COMMITMENT TO EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO HALT DRUG TRAFFIC, ECHEVERRIA SPOKE AT LENGTH OF LARGER OBSTACLES TO CONTROL -- 2000 MILE BORDER, INTENSE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND PLANES, REMOTENESS OF GROWING SITES, ECONOMIC FACTORS, ETC. ECHEVERRIA SAID HE THOUGHT BROADER APPROACH WAS NEEDED, BOTH HERE AND IN U.S., TO SENSITIZE PUBLIC TO DANGERS AND CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG ABUSE.

3. ELABORATING, ECHEVERRIA SAID ENFORCEMENT AND INTERDICTION -- IMPORTANT AS THESE WERE -- WERE NOT ENOUGH TO COPE WITH INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL PROBLEM AS BROAD AS THIS ONE. BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAD TO DEMONSTRATE TO PUBLIC, FROM VERY HIGHEST LEVELS, THAT THEY WERE FULLY COMMITTED TO FULLEST ACROSS-THE-BOARD COOPERATION TO COMBAT DRUG USE, EDUCATE YOUTH TO ITS DANGERS, AND REHABILITATE ITS VICTIMS.

4. PRES THEN PUT FORWARD HIS OWN IDEA FOR A MORE COMPREHENSIVE ATTACK: JOINT HIGH-LEVEL, HIGH-PROFILE PROGRAM OF BILATERAL COOPERATION AIMED AT (1) SENSITIZING THE PUBLIC, (2) IMPROVING AND UPGRADING COORDINATION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND AMONG VARIOUS PUBLIC AGENCIES WITHIN EACH COUNTRY, AND (3) LAYING ECONOMIC GROUNDWORK FOR TURNING DRUG-GROWING PEASANTS TOWARD MORE SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE ACTIVITY.

5. IF US WERE WILLING, ECHEVERRIA SAID, BOTH GOVERNMENT MIGHT ESTABLISH JOINT MIXED COMMISSIONS -- PERMANENT, REGULARLY-STAFFED AND BUDGETED BODIES BRINGING TOGETHER EXPERTS, IN AND OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT, MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT PROBLEM AND MOST ABLE TO DEAL WITH BOTH ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS. MEXICAN COMMISSION MIGHT CONSIST, FOR EXAMPLE, OF DEFENSE, INTERIOR, EDUCATION, AND HEALTH MINISTERS, ATTORNEY GENERAL, LEGISLATORS, MEDIA LEADERS, SOCIOLOGISTS, ETC.

6. BEYOND REGULAR STAFF LIAISON, NATIONAL COMMISSIONS MIGHT MEET WITH EACH OTHER PERIODICALLY TO HEIGHTEN PUBLIC AWARENESS OF PROBLEM AND TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION. NOTING INVOLVEMENT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OTHERWISE IMPOVERISHED CAMPESEANS IN DRUG RAISING, ECHEVERRIA SUGGESTED COMMISSIONS MIGHT COOPERATE IN CREATING NEW RURAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - PERHAPS, HE SAID, IBRD, IDB, OR EVEN EXIM RESOURCES MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FOR SUCH PROJECT (CONGRESSMEN WERE PARTICULARLY ATTRACTED TO CROP-SUBSTITUTION AND AGRO-INDUSTRY POSSIBILITIES).

7 OBVIOUSLY EXCITED OVER HIS IDEA'S POTENTIAL, ECHEVERRIA

PROPOSED INITIATING AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS
WITH PRES FORD OUTLINING HIS PLAN AND SUGGESTING POSSIBLE MODALITIES
FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION. HE WOULD ALSO HAVE SIMILAR LETTERS SENT
TO PRESIDENTS OF BOTH HOUSES OF US CONGRESS BY MEXICAN COUNTERPARTS,
INVITING THEIR PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT. AND TO GET THE BALL
ROLLING, HE PROPOSED TO CHAIR ANOTHER SESSION AT
LOS PINOS SATURDAY EVENING (TIMED
TO FIT CONGRESSMEN'S
SCHEDULE), TO BRING US TOGETHER WITH LIKELY MEXICAN
COMMISSION MEMBERS AND TO DEVELOP SPECIFIC TERMS FOR
HIS MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT FORD.

8. COMMENT: ECHEVERRIA'S DEMONSTRATION OF INTEREST
AND CONCERN COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE GRATIFYING TO CON-
GRESSMEN OR TO US. ON THE WHOLE, WE BELIEVE HIS IDEA
FOR A BIGGER PUBLIC CAMPAIGN, THROUGH MIXED COMMISSIONS
OR BY WHATEVER MEANS, HAS MERIT. AT A MINIMUM, IT HELPS
TO LOCK THE GOM MOE FIRMLY INTO THE PRINCIPLE OF CO-
OPERATIVE EFFORTS TO STEM DRUG TRAFFIC. NEEDLESS TO SAY,
BOTH CONGRESSMEN QUICKLY RECOGNIZED ITS DOMESTIC POLITICAL
VALUE AS WELL.

9. IT ALSO POSES SOME PROBLEMS, OF COURSE, PUBLIC BALLYHOO COULD
VERY WELL TAKE THE PLACE OF EFFECTIVE
ACTION AND DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM CRUCIAL CROP DESTRUC-
TION AND INTERDICTION TASKS. IT COULD BE USED AS A
SMOKE SCREEN TO COVER MEXICAN FAILURES TO DO THE HARDER
JOB OF DESTROYING PLANTINGS. AND IT COULD DILUTE
AUTHORITY OF THOSE PRESIDENTLY IN CHARGE OF ANTI-DRUG
EFFORTS (ALTHOUGH AG OJEDA PAULLADA TOLD ME THIS
MORNING THAT PRESIDENT HAD MADE CLEAR HE WOULD REMAIN
VERY MUCH IN COMMAND OF ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGN AND THAT
OUTSIDERS WOULD HAVE NO VOICE IN TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL DETAILS).
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10. DESPITE RISKS, WE SEE GREAT MERIT IN RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO
ECHEVERRIA'S INITIATIVE -NOT LEAST OF ALL BECAUSE IT WILL BE COMING
FROM HIM, NOT US. AS AG HAS NOTED TO ME, MUCH OF OUR PROBLEM IN
THE FIELDS DERIVES FROM PUBLIC APATHY AND CAMPESINO INABILITY TO
RESIST TEMPTATIONS OFFERED BY TRAFFICKERS. A BROADER, MORE IN-
TENSE PUBLIC COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF GOM COULD HELP GREATLY
TO TURN POPULAR OPROBRIUM AGAINST GROWERS AND TRAFFICKERS AND
MIGHT JUSTIFY THE ADMITTED NUISANCE OF THE MIXED-COMMISSION
APPROACH - OR EVEN OUR INVOLVEMENT IN CROP SUBSTITUTION.

11. WHILE I AGREE WITH LUERS' PRELIMINARY REACTION THAT IT IS
PREFERABLE SUCH A COMMISSION NOT BE VIEWED AS A PERMANENT BODY, SUCH
A BODY WOULD SERVE TO PROVIDE NEEDED CONTINUITY WITH CHANGE
IN ADMINISTRATIONS HERE.

12. ACTION REQUESTED: SINCE I WILL BE JOINING WITH CONGRESS-
MEN IN FOLLOW-UP MEETING SATURDAY WITH PRESIDENT, ANY PRE-
LIMINARY REACTIONS AND GUIDANCE WILL BE APPRECIATED.

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